Government of Yukon

Yukon Government NEWS

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Watson Lake to get SuperGreen Staff Housing

WHITEHORSE - Construction is underway on two new staff housing units in Watson Lake, the first in Yukon to be built to SuperGreen standards, Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation (YHC) Jim Kenyon and Environment Minister Elaine Taylor announced today.

The two new units represent a new YHC standard of construction in Yukon and include 16-inch thick insulated walls as well as increased insulation in the attic and under the structures' foundations.

SuperGreen represents a new YHC standard of construction and goes further than the GreenHome standard YHC has been promoting since 1999. The SuperGreen standard calls for superior insulation of the home, and an advanced framing design featuring a 16-inch thick uninterrupted blanket of insulation in the walls, as well as much higher levels of insulation in the attic and under the foundation than typical construction. The SuperGreen home has a minimum 87 EnerGuide rating (80 for GreenHome) on the EnerGuide evaluation program.

"This new and innovative building technology will result in significantly lower heating bills, in some cases it will only cost 20 per cent of what it costs to heat a new Yukon house with the usual 2x6 walls," Kenyon said. "By investing in better insulation and other energy efficiency measures up front, SuperGreen homes are more affordable in the long run."

"This type of construction will add to the actions the Yukon government is already undertaking to address the issue of Climate Change," Taylor added. "By adopting these practices we will reduce fuel consumption and Yukon's carbon footprint."

Construction of the new units, which will help provide housing to doctors in Watson Lake, is expected to be complete later this year.

Homeowners and builders are encouraged to adopt the energy efficiency standards with mortgage incentives from YHC. More information about the SuperGreen initiative is available from the corporation at 867-667-5759 or toll-free at 1-800-661-0408, local 5759.

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Backgrounder: SuperGreen Energy Efficiency Standard

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Backgrounder – SuperGreen Energy Efficiency Standard
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What is SuperGreen?
"Green" is a term used to indicate better energy efficiency than today's average house, which translates to heating affordability. The "SuperGreen" standard is an update on the GreenHome energy standard in an effort to bring housing efficiency into the needs of this decade. On the Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) EnerGuide evaluation program, SuperGreen must achieve an EnerGuide rating of 87 or better. Several upgrades are required to meet this standard.

To achieve this high level of energy rating in a practical manner, conventional framing techniques cannot be used effectively, as there is a greater need for a more consistent thermal break of the wood through the wall. The design works best when wood framing that bridges the inside to the outside is eliminated, because heat (energy) is transferred through wood. Yukon Housing Corporation's (YHC) wall design utilizes an uninterrupted 16 inch thick blanket of cellulose insulation from the foundation through the walls and into the attic. The walls are built with pre-manufactured double studs, similar to a roof truss, which can provide that thick, continuous blanket of insulation in between. The efficient heat recovery ventilation of the GreenHome standard still applies to the SuperGreen designs.

Why did Yukon Housing Corporation redesign energy efficiency standards?
Energy costs have risen significantly since energy efficiency standards were originally introduced in the 1970's, and even since YHC launched its GreenHome program in 1999. YHC continues to strive for ways to offset those costs with advanced design and standards. The GreenHome standard still represents a considerable improvement over the average construction, which translates into energy savings for the homeowner. The SuperGreen standard is an upgrade to

the GreenHome standard, is economic to build at today's fuel prices, and ensures long term affordability. YHC supports both standards with advice and financial incentives.

What are the incentives for homebuilders/homeowners?
The cost of building to the SuperGreen standard can be offset in a relatively short period of time by reduced energy costs and special programs from YHC. For example, there is a $4,500 grant available toward the cost of construction, and a $750 grant to cover the costs of design, building permits, inspections and certification, when a certified Green or SuperGreen home is built or purchased for the first time.

YHC also offers a "Green Mortgage," at a reduced interest rate for energy-efficient homes meeting GreenHome or SuperGreen standards (either a new home construction, or an existing home upgrade).

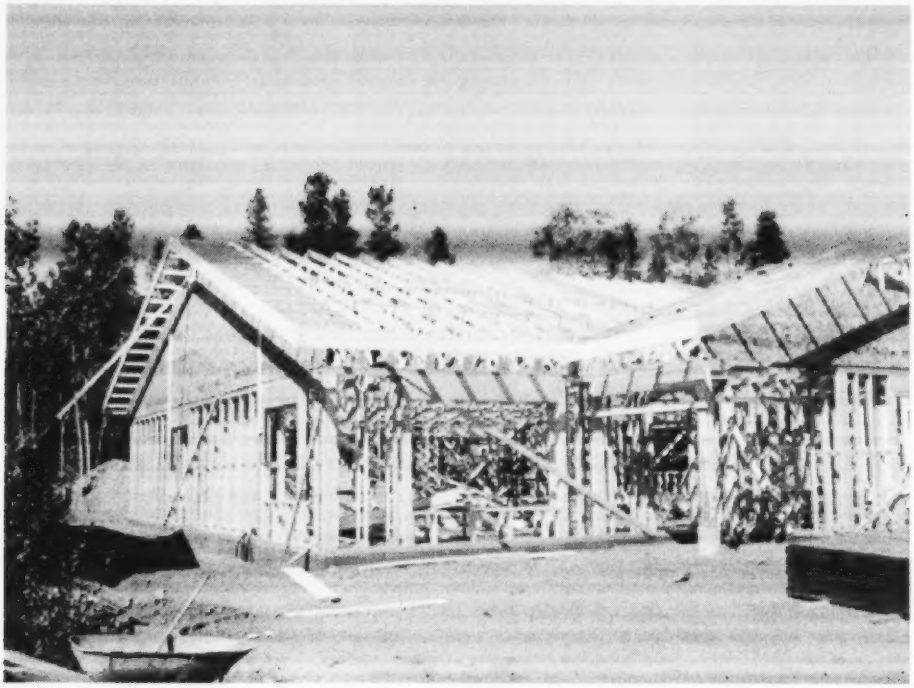
Owners of these highly energy efficient homes will benefit greatly from dramatically reduced heating costs.

Costs and benefits of building SuperGreen
It costs more initially to build to the SuperGreen standard, but modestly higher costs of wall construction are at least partially offset by the reduced size and complexity of the mechanical system.

Most significantly, the extra investment improves the long-term affordability of the house. The savings in heating costs alone can be expected to greatly pay off in the long run, possibly in as little as nine years, according to analysis using current oil costs payback over standard construction. As oil prices continue to rise, the payback term of the SuperGreen investment will further decrease. Additionally, a well-built properly ventilated SuperGreen house could last indefinitely.

Energy efficient homes can provide greater comfort and indoor air quality, reduce Green House Gas (GHG) emissions, prevent moisture and mould problems, and of course, lower the heating bills.

For more details or to arrange an interview with a technical expert from Yukon Housing Corporation, please contact Nathalie Harwood at 667-5075.



Construction begins on the Watson Lake SuperGreen homes.